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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
First regular session 2007
16-19 and 22 January 2007
Item 3 of the provisional agenda**

Annual report to the Economic and Social Council***

Summary

The present report, which is prepared annually, covers a range of issues arising from the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and provides the perspective of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on these topics of system-wide interest. It describes UNICEF actions to contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and to respond to the outcome of the 2005 World Summit. It provides information about the direction UNICEF is taking to work in closer partnership with other members of the United Nations system to ensure that development assistance produces sustainable results for children.

This report, together with an addendum containing the comments made by the members of the Executive Board during its first regular session of 2007, will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2007.

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*** This document was submitted late because of internal consultations.

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I. Introduction

1. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals will only be possible with special efforts to reach the 49 per cent of the developing world's population who are children. UNICEF took numerous steps in 2006 to ensure that this will happen, by putting more emphasis on partnerships; by increasingly integrating its programmes; and by working more effectively and efficiently, especially through harmonized work with other parts of the United Nations. Such strategic, inclusive approaches are the path to measurable and sustainable results.

Partnerships

2. The scope of the Millennium Development Goals and its related targets is so great that one of the most critical roles of UNICEF is to deepen its alliances with others whose work will affect children, and to engage other collaborators for children both in the field and in policy dialogues.

3. New partnerships were created to "Unite for Children" and ongoing partnerships were deepened and broadened. UNICEF continues to work with, contribute to and provide leadership in major global organizations and coalitions that share a focus on children, including the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization; the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Roll Back Malaria; Health Metric Network; the Partnership on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. To address the needs of 146 million undernourished children under five years of age, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) have collaborated with the World Bank, the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition and other partners in shaping the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative, which focuses on Millennium Development Goal 1, to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and undernutrition. The Executive Director also participated in the Clinton Global Initiative and in the World Economic Forum in Davos, joining with others to place the concerns of children in the centre of the global agenda.

4. In the area of sports, the Executive Director initiated the "Unite for Children, Unite for Peace" campaign with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) at the opening of the World Cup in June 2006. This campaign took advantage of a global spotlight on sports to promote nonviolence, tolerance and peace for children and for all. In addition, at the second regular session of the Executive Board in September, Fútbol Club Barcelona expanded its philanthropic tradition to address the problems of children affected by HIV/AIDS. And in the United States, the National Basketball Association launched a public service campaign in support of "Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS", which was launched in 2005 with participation of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AID and other United Nations agencies.

5. Partnerships with children and young people continue to be an important means for UNICEF and other agencies to include the most direct and most immediate perspectives on programme directions. At the "Junior 8" youth forum held in conjunction with the G8 Summit in July in Saint Petersburg, the Executive Director interacted with youth delegates from the eight member countries, who then presented their recommendations to the G8 leaders. Another major process during the year depended greatly on young people's involvement and perspectives. The

United Nation Study on Violence against Children, supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Save the Children Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, reached out to children who had experienced violence through nine regional forums. Children contributed their insights and participated in the preparation of recommendations for the study. In addition, children and young people — helped by Save the Children — played a large part in producing a special children's version of the report and an educational booklet designed to provide children and young people over the age of 12 years with information about violence and ideas for actions they can take to prevent and respond to violence. It is clear that this innovative involvement of children throughout, from preparation to published materials, contributed to the success and usefulness of the study.

Greater programme integration

6. Another UNICEF strategy for increasing the effectiveness of its programmes to reach the Millennium Development Goals involves greater integration of programmes so that results are mutually reinforcing. In West Africa, UNICEF is scaling up a community-based programme known as the Accelerated Child Survival and Development (ACSD) programme, which combines high-impact health and nutrition interventions and which has resulted in significant decreases in pilot districts of as much as 20 per cent in child mortality in only two years. UNICEF will use this model for results-driven strategies in other sectors and regions, and is sharing it widely with other partners.

7. Over the course of the year, UNICEF also continued to strengthen its partnerships within, and to harmonize its work processes with, other parts of the United Nations system. Many of these results are detailed in the following sections.

A. Funding for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

8. The seventh pledging event in the context of the multi-year funding framework took place in January 2006. Details were provided in the annual report to the Executive Board, presented at the annual session of 2006 (E/ICEF/2006/11).

9. For the current year, as of 30 September 2006, UNICEF had recorded regular resources income of $452.5 million from government donors and intergovernmental agencies against medium-term financial plan projections of $488 million. Total regular resources income from all sources for 2006 is projected to be $962 million, with the level of government regular resources contributions in line with financial plan estimates. Other resources contributions recorded from Governments were $886 million. Of this, $614 million went to other resources-regular against a financial plan of $581 million, while $272 million went to other resources-emergency against a financial plan of $394 million. Total other resources income from all sources was $1,338 million, against the 2006 plan target of $1,403 million.

10. UNICEF requires a predictable, long-term and increased base of core resources to enhance effectiveness and to better engage partner countries in capacity development, technical advice and a normative agenda in a systematic and responsive manner. UNICEF encourages all Member States to increase their annual voluntary contributions to core resources and, for those in a position to do so, to

provide multi-year commitments and payment schedules at the pledging event held at the first regular session of the Executive Board.

B. Capacity-building

11. National capacity development continues to be a key focus of UNICEF cooperation. In a trend that is continuing as part of the 2006-2009 medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), the organization is making a gradual and relative shift from an approach that is based mainly on support to project implementation to one that is more strategic, policy-oriented and focused on support to national programmes and partner institutions, including strengthening their systems and capacities to scale up basic service delivery.

12. One of the major areas in which UNICEF has engaged in capacity-building is through technical and financial support provided to the implementation of national-level household surveys, especially the multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS). The MICS have become the single most important source of data for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, as they provide data on more than half of the indicators for the Goals. MICS currently are being conducted in 54 countries.

13. To meet the increased demand for data at more frequent intervals, MICS will be conducted every three years rather than every five years. This will provide a solid and more up-to-date statistical base for national partners to use to improve their programme planning and policy formulation. The data derived from MICS are a critically important source of information for both national and global tracking of progress toward a range of international goals and targets, including the forthcoming assessment of progress towards the goals established by the General Assembly Special Session On Children, entitled *A World Fit for Children*, in September 2007, as well as the Abuja Targets on malaria, and the General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS. In this way, more frequent surveys will lead to more accurate planning, more effective programming and, therefore, to measurable results for children.

14. In 2006, a new version of *DevInfo* was released with UNICEF support. This new version operates both as a desktop application and on the internet. To support users of this new version, since May 2006 workshops are under way to reach professionals from United Nations agencies, government statistical offices, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations, representing 120 countries. Eighty countries have now adopted the *DevInfo* technology to support their national socio-economic database.

15. Urban Info, a customized version of *DevInfo* developed by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), was launched at the World Urban Forum in June 2006. Another *DevInfo* adaptation, Millennium Development Goals Info 2006, was presented at the General Assembly in September 2006. It contains the official Millennium Development Goals data set published by the United Nations Statistics Division in coordination with all other United Nations agencies. Since September 2006, the United Nations System Avian Influenza Coordinator's office has adopted the *DevInfo* database system to monitor the global situation of the H5N1 virus. The system will help with quick and efficient data collection and support both global and national teams to formulate effective preparedness and response plans to the virus.

16. EmergencyInfo, a powerful decision support system based on *DevInfo* database technology, was developed with UNICEF support to bridge information gaps within the first days of an emergency and provide support for rapid data collection, situation assessment, standard monitoring reports and disaster preparedness. By combining the advanced data access and presentation features of *DevInfo* and making it accessible on handheld digital devices, it will help humanitarian agencies to respond faster and more accurately in emergencies.

17. A new enhanced website (www.devinfo.org) offers access to information about *DevInfo* implementation and provides a forum for the global sharing of experiences in the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals using this technology.

18. UNICEF has also supported thematic south-south cooperation. This has been especially important over the course of the past year in the area of HIV and AIDS. Brazil, for example, has reached out to Bolivia, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Paraguay, San Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste to expand care and support to children, adolescents and pregnant women affected by HIV/AIDS as well as other sexually transmitted diseases. Among the main outputs for this cooperation have been the sharing of experiences, supplies of antiretroviral drugs and test kits, and capacity-building for health professionals.

C. Transaction costs and efficiency

19. In the area of financial management, reforms made over the past three years have created new efficiencies. The benefits of other work now in progress will be available in the near future. All of these efforts are being done in close collaboration with other funds, programmes and agencies.

20. The integrated enterprise resource planning system implemented in 1999 has continued to bring new efficiencies in the areas of financial management, with benefits at the headquarters and field levels and for donors, development partners and staff. There is a seamless system for financial transactions from New York to the smallest field office, which is updated every 10 hours and handles more than 10 million transactions per year from 234 sites and in 147 currencies. With this system, UNICEF operationally closed its financial books of accounts for 2005 by the end of January 2006, four months earlier than the previous biennium and the earliest it has ever been done. As a result, accurate financial reports to government partners and donors were generated from early February with a ripple effect of efficiencies. Concomitant with this, field offices now have increased authority in the area of payments to partners and in administering their support budgets.

21. In the area of human resources administration, including payroll, the SAP human resources module has been in place since mid-2005. This system is now being extended to regional offices, including any co-located country offices, enabling more rapid and accurate input of data.

22. In 2006, UNICEF harmonized its cost-recovery policies with those of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) members, making it much easier for partners, both donors and programme countries, to plan programmes and encourage partnerships. The harmonization of other financial practices among the funds and programmes has accelerated, with benefits for all parts of the system and for partners. The harmonized approach to cash transfers has now been launched and a

simplified means of transferring funds to partners is now available to all UNICEF field offices. A roll-out of this harmonized policy by the United Nations country team (UNCT) members is under way.

23. Discussions are under way among the funds and programmes in a number of other areas. Now that basic financial reporting has been harmonized, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF are looking at revising the presentations of their biennial support budgets in a results-based format. When this is done, all of the UNICEF budget will be results-based, as 85 per cent of the UNICEF budget is already results-based with a results framework in the country programmes linked to the focus areas of the MTSP and national priorities based on the Millennium agenda. In addition, the Comptrollers of the United Nations, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP are discussing the creation of one standard set of Financial Rules and Regulations. This will facilitate the adoption in 2010 of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), for which work is well under way to ensure shared interpretations and strategies. The adoption of IPSAS will further strengthen a coherent approach in financial management throughout the United Nations.

24. The first United Nations joint office has been established in Cape Verde, and the UNDG Executive Committee agencies currently are undertaking a review to identify its benefits, including any demonstrated efficiencies in administration, management and programme effectiveness, which have been brought about by the common country programme. UNICEF continues, with the other funds and programmes, to work for common premises by regularly reviewing proposed and active shared premises. UNICEF also works closely with a network of United Nations organizations to increase efficiencies in administrative procedures, finding areas for common services. One example is harmonizing travel processes and procedures, where UNICEF has taken steps to simplify its procedures in ways that conform with best practices in other agencies.

D. Coherence, effectiveness and relevance of operational activities for development

25. The report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence had just been issued at the time of finalization of the present report. UNICEF was engaged in the discussions held by the Panel, both bilaterally and as part of the consultations organized in various locations. It is clear that the directions expected to be proposed by the Panel are consistent with the work already being carried out as part of the ongoing reforms of the UNDG, Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination machinery, and the implementation of the previous triennial comprehensive policy review. UNICEF will continue to work in these areas and, pending decisions by the inter-agency and intergovernmental bodies on the implementation of reforms stemming from the Panel's report, will report to the Executive Board in accordance with the established mechanisms as well as any new ones that may be established.

26. The cost-recovery policy mentioned in paragraph 22 above is facilitating the ability of UNICEF to collaborate with partners, including through participation in joint United Nations programmes. These programmes are now done in the context of

United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). Thirty-eight UNDAFs were completed in 2006, bringing the total to date to 112. The guidelines for Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and UNDAFs have now been used for four years, and the circulation of experienced senior staff and improved training have helped country teams use these instruments more effectively for their planning. One measure of this is that UNDAFs are increasingly commonly directly related to national development plans, including poverty reduction strategies (PRSs).

27. Originally, the UNDAF was to be based on the needs identified by the CCA, but there has been an increase in nationally-produced analyses, usually associated with a PRS. Therefore, the requirement for a CCA has evolved and in some cases, country teams and national partners have agreed that a separate CCA would be duplicative. This trend needs to be monitored to ensure that the national analysis adequately covers such areas of concern as human rights and child protection. UNCTs are also involved in Joint Assistance Strategies, which integrate the support strategies of all (signatory) donors and agencies, in countries where they have been developed, including Ghana, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

28. An evaluation of the role and quality of UNDAFs carried out for the UNDG during 2006 concluded that UNDAFs have become more focused over the past years, that the United Nations in the field is now better aligned with national processes and that UNDAFs have strengthened the United Nations' collective identity and team-building. At the same time, the transaction costs of the UNDAF process are still high. The United Nations is not yet fully reflecting new aid modalities in its work and there is scope for the United Nations to better exploit its comparative advantage in programming. The current revision of the CCA/UNDAF guidelines is taking these findings into account.

29. The planning of country programmes involves the preparation and approval of cumulative documentation from the CCA (in most cases), the UNDAF and, based on the UNDAF and for each agency, a country programme document (CPD) for approval by the Executive Board and a country programme action plan (CPAP). In order to streamline this process, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP prepared a common proposal that was initially presented to the UNICEF Executive Board at the annual session in June. The proposal was that one single document be prepared which would incorporate elements of the CCA, UNDAF, CPD and CPAP. A portion of this would be presented to the Executive Boards for approval, as CPDs are currently. The proposals were not fully adopted by the respective Executive Boards. Efforts to streamline the planning process and increasing the coherence of United Nations programmes will continue in 2007.

30. The Regional Directors of the UNDG Executive Committee agencies and of other agencies and organizations have met with increasing frequency to support the ability of country teams as they cooperate with national partners to deliver development results. The Regional Directors' Team in Southern Africa, which was started to support UNCT responses to the "triple threat" of HIV, food insecurity and governance problems, has continued to mature. The team now covers both Southern and Eastern Africa and has a full Programme Support Group which coordinates responses to UNCT requests for support. The Latin America and Caribbean region also has a very active Regional Directors' Team that is supporting the development of CCAs and UNDAFs, resolving implementation issues and supporting the development of UNCTs. There is now agreement that a regional hub should be

established in Panama, to increase the ability of regional staff to support country teams. All Regional Directors' Teams were requested to make a joint assessment of the performance of Resident Coordinators in 2005. For some countries, a "180-degree assessment" tool was introduced on a pilot basis, through which the members of a UNCT provide an opinion of other UNCT members, including the Resident Coordinator. The assessment meetings have been frank, constructive and useful to the UNDP Regional Directors in making a more balanced report on Resident Coordinator performance to the chair of the UNDG.

31. UNICEF fully supports the enhancement of the role of the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator as an objective leader of a UNCT who speaks for the United Nations with one voice. As a result of strong encouragement from the Executive Director, an additional four UNICEF staff have been appointed as Resident Coordinators, bringing to nine the number of UNICEF staff who are currently serving as Resident Coordinators. An additional UNICEF staff member is serving as a deputy Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator. This brings to 18 the number of UNICEF staff who have ever served as Resident Coordinator, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General or deputy Resident Coordinators.

E. Evaluation of operational activities

32. As noted in last year's report, evaluations in the United Nations system are being strengthened by inter-agency collaboration. In this regard, a Tsunami Evaluation Coalition of 40 organizations, including the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and WHO, has prepared a consolidated document which assessed the impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami on local and national capacities, the role of needs assessment, the coordination of international humanitarian assistance, the links between relief, rehabilitation and development, and the funding of the tsunami response. UNICEF was a member of the Coalition's core management group.

33. A Real-Time Evaluation Initiative is now under way to agree on an inter-agency approach for real-time evaluation of humanitarian actions. UNICEF has prepared a concept paper for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The Horn of Africa (Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia) formed the first pilot case.

34. In the area of evaluation, UNICEF is taking steps to prepare for the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development (TCPR). UNICEF is leading the task group of the United Nations Evaluation Group on country-led evaluation. A first pilot is under way in South Africa. The exercise consists in assessing from a country perspective the contribution of the United Nations and other external support. UNICEF, with UNDP, is co-leading an assessment of the quality of the current UNDAFs. The findings will be included in the TCPR report to be reviewed by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2007.

35. UNICEF is gathering lessons and good practices from the ACSD programme through systematic weekly updates, regional network meetings, country annual reports and independent evaluations. The knowledge generated through these processes is used to formulate policies and update strategies in real time for ACSD.

UNICEF is also working to develop more general knowledge management strategies for widespread and decentralized application in UNICEF programmes. This will help to develop and document a strong evidence base to improve both implementation and policy advocacy in all programmes.

F. Gender mainstreaming

36. UNICEF continues to seek innovative approaches to reaching Millennium Development Goal 3, promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls, by infusing its programmes with a gender perspective as part of the human rights-based approach to programming. UNICEF is also taking steps to improve gender balance within the organization.

37. All country offices have been asked to undertake a gender self-assessment and review of UNICEF-assisted country programmes during the programme cycle, using the specific gender assessment tools available in the Programme Policy and Procedure Manual. UNICEF currently is conducting an organization-wide evaluation to assess implementation of the policy on gender equality and women's rights adopted in 1994 as well as implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/250 of 22 December 2004 on the TCPR.

38. UNICEF is an active member of the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, which aims to strengthen accountability for gender equality among UNCTs. As noted in this report last year, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNICEF conducted a study on the extent to which gender equality is reflected in the latest generation of CCA/UNDAFs. The review showed that the link between analysis and corresponding action and investment in gender equality remains weak, and noted that UNCTs have demonstrated insufficient capacity to undertake holistic, rights-based programming for gender equality and women's empowerment. The review proposed launching a process through which self-selected UNCTs would generate replicable means of undertaking rights-based, change-oriented programming to increase the capacity of government and civil society to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This process will be well-documented and best practices would be disseminated widely for adoption by other countries. This recommendation was endorsed in June 2006 by the Executive Heads of the UNDG Executive Committee and the initiative will be led by UNICEF and UNIFEM.

39. For many years, United Nations agencies have been presenting individual reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the status of implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in areas falling within the scope of their activities. The Committee has recently requested United Nations entities to explore means of enhancing the flow of information from the United Nations system to the Committee. As planned, UNICEF, in partnership with UNFPA, UNIFEM and WHO, presented a joint report to the Committee at its thirty-fourth session dealing with reproductive health and violence for four countries: Cambodia, Eritrea, Mali and Thailand. The report for Eritrea was prepared by the UNCT. This practice was subsequently expanded at the Committee's thirty-sixth session, at which another six reports were prepared by UNCTs, and will continue at the thirty-seventh session. The Committee expressed its appreciation for this coordinated and comprehensive

presentation of information. These are the first instances of UNCTs preparing a report to a treaty body and this precedent is under consideration as a best practice for adoption by other such bodies.

40. The Legislative Reform Initiative which UNICEF is conducting continues to produce programming tools to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women through comprehensive, holistic and participatory legislative reforms, and the development of a rights-based legislative framework. UNICEF is also developing a handbook to serve as a reference on harmonizing national legislation with international instruments, particularly these two Conventions, to be used by legislators, parliamentarians, jurists, lawyers, judges, line ministries, government officials, human rights and children's rights advocates and policymakers.

41. UNICEF continues to work at national, provincial and community levels to prevent gender-based violence in conflict situations and to respond to the needs of survivors in emergency situations.

42. UNICEF has participated in the creation and dissemination of field guidelines and tools for implementation of existing policies, and has promoted inter-agency collaboration in addressing sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies. The IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings are now ready for field testing.

43. UNICEF, as co-chair of the ECHA-Executive Committees on Peace and Security Working Group on Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel, has finalized the drafting of the Secretary-General's Strategy on Victim Assistance, which is due for discussion by the General Assembly in 2007.

44. UNICEF is committed to attaining the United Nations system-wide goal of gender parity in staffing at all levels by 2010. The report of a study on gender imbalance in UNICEF, presented to the Global Management Team in January 2006, indicated that steady progress has been made and that UNICEF ranks among the top three United Nations agencies in terms of gender parity (46 per cent). However, gender imbalance at the senior levels has been quite persistent. The study concluded that gender parity can be achieved by 2010 if senior management takes a clear and accountable lead, models the desired management culture and invests in human resources management.

45. The Executive Director moved quickly to address these recommendations. She appointed a Special Adviser for Gender and Diversity to report on follow-up to the recommendations and attainment of the goals laid out in the report. She ensured that the steering committee and its reference group which support the comprehensive organizational review are gender balanced. She has established a policy that one half of all committee members should be women. She requested that the organizational review and the supporting strategic review of human resources management incorporate the findings of the gender report in their work.

46. Further progress has been seen in the implementation of the first-ever Senior Staff Review and Rotation Exercise, which was initiated by the Executive Director. Positive action was taken to increase the gender balance in senior management and

there was an increase in the number of female staff at the D-2 level from 19 per cent in 2005 to 30 per cent in September 2006.

47. The global action plan for implementation of the gender parity study is in place. It is derived from a strategy of policy commitment, qualitative and quantitative measurement, institutionalized human resources management procedures and an organizational culture of respect and accommodation. The plan proposes action in six key areas: recruitment; retention; talent development; work culture; accountability; and monitoring and reporting.

48. Managers will be accountable for the action plan. The Special Advisor, Gender and Diversity, supported by a review group, will be the advocate and link for monitoring the implementation of the plan and will report periodically on progress to the Global Management Team.

II. Follow-up to international conferences and panels

49. The commitments set out in the final document of the General Assembly Special Session on Children, entitled *A World Fit for Children*, are being implemented in the context of follow-up to other major international conferences and summits. Notable among them are the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development, both held in 2002. The goals of *A World Fit for Children* are also firmly grounded in the resolutions of the 2005 World Summit and the 2006 High-Level Meeting on AIDS.

50. The four major goal areas of *A World Fit for Children* strongly reinforce the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. The building of a world fit for children would be a major step in fulfilling the commitments of the Millennium Summit of 2000.

51. Some 177 countries are now engaged in follow-up activities to the Special Session on Children which include incorporating the goals of *A World Fit for Children* into their planning processes, either by developing National Plans of Action on children's issues (NPAs) or by integrating the goals into mainstream national plans and/or PRSs. Several countries have used both mechanisms. In some countries, subnational follow-up has been a major focus of activity, including the development of provincial or local plans of action.

52. There is also increased attention to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The majority of NPAs make reference to the Convention or to the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the respective state party reports. Other human rights instruments, such as International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment and ILO Convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are also increasingly recognized as part of the framework for NPAs. Almost all the NPAs prepared since the Special Session anticipate the need to review national legislation in relation to the provisions of the Convention. A number also propose strategies to increase the attention given to the views of children.

53. A total of 47 countries had completed NPAs by end of 2005, an increase from 25 in 2003. In addition, 99 countries had incorporated the goals of *A World Fit for*

Children into national development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies by end of 2005, an increase from 68 in 2003. These goals are also explicitly targeted in sectoral plans of 90 countries.

54. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided to convene a commemorative plenary meeting in 2007, devoted to the follow-up to the outcome and the progress made in implementing the Declaration and the Plan of Action, based on a report to be prepared by the Secretary-General. UNICEF was asked to prepare and disseminate information on the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action. UNICEF is now working closely with Governments to support their reviews of progress. Because they are so closely linked, national reporting may take the form of a distinct section of the national report on the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals. This work is taking place through local UNICEF offices, National Committees for UNICEF and UNCTs.

55. UNICEF actively participated in the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2006 and played a fundamental role in ensuring the visibility of the situation and rights of the girl child. As the Commission's fifty-first session in early 2007 will focus on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, UNICEF is a central partner of the Division of Advancement of Women in the preparations and will support participation from country offices and young people from all regions. UNICEF has worked closely with the Division, the NGO Committee on UNICEF, the Working Group on Girls and the Innocenti Research Centre in organizing the expert group meeting that will feed into the Secretary-General's report on the girl child to the Commission. The report of the expert group meeting is being translated into a youth-friendly version by UNICEF for discussion and sharing with young people.

Conclusion

56. A culture of continual improvement is being established at UNICEF, in harmony with the processes of United Nations reform. UNICEF has reached out to other partners, within and outside the United Nations system, more inclusively and more dynamically over the past year. Steps are being made in knowledge management so that best practices, programme data and evaluation results are shared and used for programme adaptations.

57. This is leading to more efficient and effective programming and advocacy for children, and to the creation of measurable results. This is essential to reaching the Millennium Development Goals and the provisions of the Millennium Declaration. In doing so, UNICEF is fully working in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration laid out by the TCPR by continuing to improve its effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact.

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For action

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Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative Global Framework for Action: Summary note**

Summary

The present report outlines the background of the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative and contains a draft decision for consideration by the Executive Board.

I. Background

1. Undernutrition is associated with over half of the more than 10 million deaths of children under five years of age that occur each year. The consequences of child hunger and undernutrition are extreme for the individuals and families affected and the communities and nations concerned. In 2000, 189 countries endorsed the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals, including Goal 1 - to halve the proportion of the world's poor and hungry by 2015. Six years later, hunger and undernutrition remain among the most urgent challenges facing the international community. A determined global effort is needed for prevention among children at risk, and, where necessary, for remedial care. This is reinforced by the 2005 World Summit Outcome document adopted by the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit, which stated that "we are convinced that the eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition, particularly as they affect children, is crucial for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals" (A/60/L.1, para. 46).

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** The present document was submitted late because of the need for internal consultation.

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2. There is now less than a decade left to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals. Success in at least five of the seven other Goals depends on bringing an end to hunger and undernutrition: Goal 2, universal primary education; Goal 3, gender equality; Goal 4, reducing child mortality; Goal 5, improving maternal health; and Goal 6, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

3. These Goals and the United Nations Millennium Declaration provide the background for the work of the World Food Programme (WFP) in fighting hunger and the work of UNICEF in combating undernutrition among children. Over the past year, WFP and UNICEF have been developing a Global Framework for Action for Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition that takes a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach to preventing the problem.

4. This effort has been broad, consultative and inclusive. Consultations have been held with many United Nations agencies, non-governmental and civil society organizations, foundations and potential private sector partners. It has also benefited greatly from continuing dialogue, in both formal and informal sessions, with the members of the UNICEF and WFP Executive Boards.

5. The Global Framework for Action was initially drafted by inter-agency technical working groups led by WFP and UNICEF with inputs from the World Bank, the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), which includes all major United Nations partners, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and others. Regional and country perspectives were gained through consultations held in Southern Africa, Western Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Framework has continued to be developed in close dialogue with key partners, including the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and many others through the consultative process. It draws upon good practice in ongoing collaboration with Governments to address child hunger and undernutrition by the two initiating agencies and the wider United Nations country teams (UNCTs).

6. This paper summarizes the contents of the Global Framework for Action and is complemented by a detailed draft work plan for the Initiative for the period 2007-2008. The draft work plan is under discussion with partners and is being made available to members of the Executive Board.

II. Global Framework for Action — summary of main document

7. The failure to prevent hunger and undernutrition has an acute impact on national development by slowing economic growth and perpetuating the cycle of poverty through three principal routes: direct losses in productivity from poor physical status; indirect losses from poor cognitive function and deficits in schooling; and increased health care costs.

8. The geographical distribution of child undernutrition is highly uneven. More than 70 per cent of the world's 146 million underweight children under age five years live in just 10 countries, with more than 50 per cent located in South Asia alone. Meanwhile, a dozen countries, located in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and East Asia, register 40 per cent or more of their young children

underweight, according to the most recent data available (*Progress for Children: A Report Card on Nutrition* (No.4), UNICEF, May 2006).

9. The causes of child hunger and undernutrition are predictable and preventable, and can be addressed through affordable means. Dramatic improvements are possible even in the absence of economic growth. The Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI) is a global partnership that focuses attention on the problem, and its causes and effects. It aims to mobilize support for national actions and build awareness of the available solutions for addressing the problem on a global scale. Through the provision of evidence-based advocacy, information and communication, the Initiative aims to support national and local decision makers in analysing and designing responses tailored to the specific problems facing children. It seeks to galvanize efforts, including from the United Nations system, in support of nationally led, local and regional efforts for the reduction of hunger and undernutrition among children.

10. The operational focus of ECHUI is Millennium Development Goal 1, target 2 — "to halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger" by 2015. The Initiative's key impact indicator is the first measure of progress for Goal 1, target 2 — the prevalence of underweight children under five years of age, as established by WHO and UNICEF. During the last decade, the overall child undernutrition rate has decreased by approximately 1.7 per cent per year. This rate of decline needs to increase more than twofold to achieve the target. As a first step, ECHUI aims to mobilize the political, technical and other resources needed to support countries' own efforts, through their national development frameworks, to double the average annual reduction rates for underweight children under five years of age.

11. The ECHUI partnership will promote global action to support national, regional and local efforts, built on four major pillars:

(a) Increased *awareness* of hunger and undernutrition and increased understanding of potential solutions among the public in industrialized and developing countries and among development and funding decision makers;

(b) Strengthened national *policies* and accelerated programmes affecting hunger and nutrition;

(c) Increased *capacities for action* in communities facing child hunger and undernutrition;

(d) Increased *efficiency and accountability* among all partners in their efforts to reduce child hunger and undernutrition.

12. The partners to the Initiative will promote a range of support measures to address hunger and undernutrition, including in the areas of health, nutrition and hygiene education; key commodity-based interventions; household food security, food production and livelihoods; basic education; maternal and child health; HIV/AIDS prevention; and social protection. Different groups of partners will take overall leadership in specific areas. Building on their existing work in the field and areas of mandate and expertise, UNICEF and WFP will take the lead in advocating for and promoting a set of practical measures to address both the immediate and underlying causes of child undernutrition at family and community levels.

13. These measures, to be determined on a country basis, will include *essential health, hygiene and nutrition education and promotion activities*, tailored to local needs and cultural conditions, and aimed at empowering parents, other family caregivers and local decision makers. The measures will aim for sustained increases in awareness among families and communities of child nutrition problems and their solutions, and the promotion of demand for nutrition-related basic services. Emphasis will be placed on the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding and the use of appropriate home treatment for illness such as oral rehydration therapy. The measures which UNICEF and WFP will take the lead in promoting with national partners will also contain *key commodity-linked interventions* including micronutrient supplementation services, household water treatment, hand-washing with soap, parasite control measures – particularly deworming – and situation-specific household food security interventions. This overall set of measures will be adapted with national partners to respond to the needs of families and children in individual countries and geographic areas, based on available evidence and causal analysis, as an integral part of the national policy and programme development process.

14. The *partnership* approach of ECHUI aims to forge strong alliances among national Governments, international agencies, the private sector and other sectors of civil society, including technical, educational and community-oriented – including faith-based – organizations. It seeks to strengthen linkages across disciplines, institutions, sectors and countries, building solidarity, exchanging experience and mobilizing resources for the ultimate goal of ending child hunger and undernutrition. The roles of WFP and UNICEF as initiating partners in this process will be as catalysts to increase synergies among a broad range of allies, built around the four pillars – increased awareness of the problem, strengthened policies and programmes, greater capacities for community action and heightened efficiency of global partnership efforts – described above.

15. The *operational* approach of ECHUI is: to help to strengthen national capacity and policy design for integrating and scaling-up delivery of a well-designed and comprehensive set of anti-hunger interventions to the most vulnerable children and families through effective delivery channels, including community organizations; to adapt delivery and financing strategies to different settings; to promote awareness and sustained demand through approaches that empower families with information; and to support and facilitate large-scale coordination and logistics operations when needed to address the problems of countries and districts with the highest burdens of child hunger and undernutrition.

16. The *advocacy* approach of ECHUI is: to adopt an integrated, cross-sectoral policy and programme approach to hunger reduction (for example, helping to identify and draw attention to the close links between household food insecurity, illness and infections, water quality and undernutrition among children in countries with a high prevalence of HIV); to conduct a global campaign to increase understanding of the problem and awareness of available solutions; and to promote common advocacy and communication approaches to child hunger and undernutrition with and among existing initiatives and programmes. The SCN will provide major technical support and policy guidance on this and other aspects of the Initiative.

17. The Initiative will take forward a human rights-based approach as part of national and global efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals, based on the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other instruments that Governments have adopted. Consistent with the principles of the Convention, the Initiative will promote, advocate for and support inclusive strategies: (a) give priority to reaching the poorest and most marginalized families and communities; (b) increase their participation in decision-making on issues related to hunger and nutrition; and (c) empower them in taking action for the survival, growth and development of their own children, supported by the provision of basic services. The promotion with partners of district-based planning and community-level monitoring will also support greater equity in achieving results for children.

18. Since the composition of the set of health, hygiene and nutrition measures which will be promoted as part of the broader Initiative will vary according to country and local circumstances, the estimation of incremental costs can only be illustrative at present. Work to refine cost estimates will be ongoing, based on country and international evidence. Initial costing efforts during the preparation of the Initiative suggest that additional spending in the range of $79 per household per year may be required to address these elements of the child hunger and undernutrition problem, and thereby to make a direct impact on the targets for the Millennium Development Goal on poverty and hunger and several of the other Millennial Goals. For countries with underweight prevalence greater than 10 per cent, this would imply an immediate resource gap of approximately $1 billion per year for investment in 85 million households. This estimate takes account of what countries could currently finance themselves and the immediate capacity constraints to expanding the coverage of key services. Over time, improvements in national capacities for service delivery and rising contributions by community organizations, NGOs and families themselves would all influence the resource gap. The Initiative would encourage contributions to meeting country needs for key investments in child nutrition through various means, including national expenditure reviews linked to poverty reduction strategies, consideration of allocation priorities among multilateral lending and bilateral aid organizations, and through appropriate prioritisation of child hunger and nutrition problems in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and new country programmes of United Nations agencies.

19. The investment costs associated with the focus set of measures would decrease and become sustainable over time as interventions become more integrated across sectors, linking synergistically with programmes in such areas as food production and livelihood promotion, basic education and HIV/AIDS, and matched by more effective behavioural practices and expenditures at family and community levels.

III. Strategic positioning of the Initiative

20. **The need for a renewed global effort**. Without urgent, focused and more strategic efforts, many developing countries will not reach the target of Millennium Development Goal 1 of halving hunger by 2015. Focusing on child hunger prevents irreversible damage to human development and is fundamental to achieving the other Goals. A focus on child hunger also brings cohesion to the various initiatives and efforts in favour of nutrition, food security education and health. A broad-based global campaign reinforces and multiplies the impact of these initiatives, and creates

the leverage needed to have a deep and lasting impact on hunger and undernutrition. Global efforts will be underpinned by periodic monitoring of indicators for the Goals and of related hunger and nutrition indicators through existing instruments, including United Nations reports on the Millennium Development Goals and the *Progress for Children* report card, as new international data become available.

21. **Harmonization among ongoing initiatives**. Among the existing international initiatives and partnerships most relevant to ECHUI are the International Alliance Against Hunger; Integrated Management of Childhood Illness; the Partnership for Child Development; Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH); the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative; the Global Public-Private Partnership for Hand-Washing with Soap; the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative; the *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS* campaign; the International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage; GAIN; the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization; the Education for All Fast Track Initiative; and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. ECHUI will work in a highly synergistic way with this wide spectrum of existing partnerships and related efforts and will promote strong and broad cohesion among them, based on the common challenge. The Initiative will add value by promoting a greater priority given to child hunger and nutrition challenges in national policies and programmes, through analysis, evidence-based advocacy, social mobilization and communication - and by promoting interventions that strengthen the capacities of families and local communities in particular. Success in these approaches would increase the effectiveness of the entire range of initiatives that bear upon child hunger and undernutrition.

22. **Harmonization with United Nations and national development planning processes**. ECHUI provides a range of collaborating United Nations agency partners with an important instrument to collectively advance more coherent and effective approaches to addressing child hunger, food insecurity and undernutrition, through the harmonized United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process in support of national goals. This process includes the Common Country Assessment, joint programmes and annual work plans supported by members of the UNCT. Collaboration of UNCT partners with the country operations of the World Bank and regional development banks and with non-governmental organizations will also be intensified in this area. ECHUI partners will encourage the alignment of United Nations country cooperation and joint programmes around key causal factors in the country context; and will encourage more cohesive national priority actions related to child hunger and nutrition, in particular those incorporated in poverty reduction strategies and other national development frameworks.

23. **Reform principles**. In light of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and related initiatives, the international community is committed to strengthening the capacity of national authorities to lead and coordinate efforts in all the Millennium Development Goal areas. This commitment aims to help countries to achieve efficient resource use, rapid action and results-based management.

24. Based on the widely adopted principles for reform, the periodic assessment of ECHUI at the country level will include its effectiveness in encouraging stakeholders to work towards the establishment and operation of: (a) one agreed country action framework for addressing child hunger and undernutrition, linked to the national development framework, as the basis for coordinating the work of all

partners; (b) one national coordinating authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate; and (c) one agreed country-level and locally anchored monitoring and evaluation system. This will include, for example, assisting national authorities in the consolidation of information and evidence on child hunger and undernutrition to support the national process of planning, decision-making and budgetary allocation.

25. ECHUI will aim to stimulate, enable and help government partners to prioritize the aims of eliminating child hunger and reducing undernutrition and to reflect these in their policies, budgets, legal frameworks and poverty reduction strategies. It will support the efforts of national institutions to analyse the situation of children in the country, build consensus on priority interventions, and obtain information on policies and actions that have successfully reduced child hunger and undernutrition internationally.

26. Local analysis and evidence will inform priorities and actions at the subnational level. Wider consensus on child hunger and nutrition issues will promote intensified, better-targeted, adequately prioritized and budgeted interventions across sectors, including in municipal, provincial and district programmes. This consensus will also help to raise awareness and support informed action by civil society and community organizations working to address all aspects of the challenge.

IV. Operational implications

27. During the planning of ECHUI, WFP and UNICEF have sought to catalyse sustainable action by incorporating this work into the mainstream of their organizations and strategic plans at the headquarters, regional and country levels. Requests to be associated with planning and implementation of the Initiative have been received through WFP and UNICEF regional offices in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Joint actions have been initiated or interest expressed in more than 30 countries where WFP and UNICEF are present. The Initiative will be taken forward based on a wide range of existing cooperation activities that are already taking place through Executive Board-approved country programmes, and will strengthen, broaden and intensify these activities.

28. In the case of UNICEF, the Initiative will form a major part of organizational efforts to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals and to achieve key targets of the 2006-2009 medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), supported by the approved strategies in health and nutrition and in water, sanitation and hygiene. ECHUI will help to intensify efforts towards the MTSP targets dealing with child growth and nutrition, family care practices and the nutrition-related Core Commitments for Children in emergencies under the MTSP focus area on young child survival and development, as well as to increase the synergies with targets relating to basic education and gender equality, HIV/AIDS and policy advocacy and partnerships.

29. All three tiers of participation – country, regional and headquarters – are supported by improved programme and management efficiencies, including assessment and analysis of child and maternal undernutrition issues that are more closely linked to maternal and child health issues, and closer analysis of cross-sectoral inputs to, for example, basic education and gender equality.

30. As the Initiative moves into the implementation phase in 2007, a principal aim will be continued integration of tasks and identification of areas where efficiency and effectiveness are possible at all levels, based on existing resources. For example, it will be possible to integrate planning and review exercises for a range of child survival and development, maternal health, basic education and other programmes, thus reducing the need for separate consultations devoted to ECHUI alone. This integration has already been demonstrated in an all-Africa representatives meeting that focused on child survival and development issues, and in joint regional management team meetings in Latin America and the Caribbean. A further example is the linkage of the Initiative with investments in areas, such as basic education and school feeding, addressing the inter-generational transmission of poverty.

31. The approved and forthcoming country c -operation programmes of WFP and UNICEF, within the UNDAF process with other United Nations partner agencies and led by national authorities, will continue to be the primary vehicles for support to national efforts and frameworks relating to hunger and undernutrition.

32. As ECHUI implementation proceeds, the consultation process between the UNCT and national and international partners will make it possible to consider more fully whether additional resources will be needed within the framework of country programmes where collaboration has already begun.

33. Resource implications can be broken down into two broad categories: (a) costs of funding a small, joint execution team to support the Initiative's work; and (b) reorienting and refocusing within each organization in the framework of its strategic plan:

(a) **Providing leadership to the Initiative**. A small, joint execution team of WFP and UNICEF personnel drawn from other responsibilities will be required to support the Initiative and service both the Steering Committee – the Executive Directors of WFP and UNICEF and the Chair of the Partners' Group – and the Partners' Group. It is expected that the Partners' Group will be chaired by UNHCR, supported by Vice-Chairs from non-governmental organizations and the private sectors. Other responsibilities of the joint team will include:

(i) management of partnership development processes;

(ii) best practice and "how to" documentation;

(iii) joint policy guidelines;

(iv) establishment and maintenance of strategic partnerships;

(v) development of communication activities and community approaches;

(vi) costing and resource tracking work.

The estimated costs for the core team of approximately $3 million per annum are expected to be funded in part by agency allocations from existing core resources, as well as by supporting foundations, the private sector and other partner organizations.

(b) **Reorientation to contribute to achieving the ECHUI goals**. WFP and UNICEF will call on internal divisions and offices to enhance their focus on the Initiative. In the case of UNICEF, these costs will mainly be covered through

allocations of part of the time of existing staff. Some specific areas, such as communication and data monitoring capacity in support of the Initiative, may require limited additional resources. As implementation of the Initiative begins, these costs will be incorporated within the existing UNICEF strategic planning framework and in regular budget planning and programme submissions.

34. WFP and UNICEF themselves will not seek to channel wider resources to meet the estimated resource gaps for national action. Their role will focus on advocacy and leveraging of resources with decision makers at national and international levels in order to promote increased and more effective investments. Among the initiating partners, UNICEF will focus in particular on: intensifying support for national efforts to tackle undernutrition through its country programmes of cooperation; working as a catalyst for national and global action by drawing on its capacity and expertise in communication, in the monitoring of child data and, increasingly, in policy-oriented advocacy; and on promoting inclusive, rights-based strategies and social mobilization to help to empower, and strengthen demand among, poor families and communities. UNICEF will also make its global supply capacity and procurement services available to national and other partners who are scaling up nutrition-related interventions and services in the commodity groups where UNICEF has established expertise. The organization will assist in monitoring nutrition-related indicators and trends in areas related to the Initiative through UNICEF global publications and databases on children.

V. Next immediate steps

35. The secretariat seeks the Executive Board's support for implementation of the ECHUI Global Framework for Action and its draft work plan, including those operations and activities specific to UNICEF.

36. Following consideration by the Executive Board, WFP, UNICEF and other partners will finalize the detailed work plan for the Initiative, including an annual results matrix, and will regularly update and integrate their agency work plans to take the Initiative forward. The plans will ensure that monitoring and accountability — including key performance indicators for assessing impact and effectiveness - are part of the ECHUI management structure. The two organizations will also provide the Executive Board with periodic information and analysis on progress of the Initiative, including results achieved, constraints, opportunities and lessons learned.

VI. Draft decision

The Executive Board,

Having considered the document on the Global Framework for Action to End Child Hunger and Undernutrition,

1. *Welcomes* the Global Framework for Action for the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative;

2. *Recognizes* the Initiative's potential contribution to achieving Millennium Development Goal 1, and the catalytic role of WFP and UNICEF, working through their respective mandates and established Memorandum of

Understanding, in mobilizing the wider global partnerships required to end child hunger and undernutrition;

3. *Encourages* UNICEF, with WFP, to mobilize a broad range of partners to support national efforts in this critical area, with the goals of:

(a) Increasing awareness of child hunger and undernutrition, and increasing understanding of potential solutions;

(b) Strengthening national policies and programmes;

(c) Increasing country capacities for direct community action;

(d) Increasing the effectiveness and accountability of global efforts to reduce child hunger and undernutrition.

4. *Requests* UNICEF, with WFP, to provide periodic information and analysis on progress of the Initiative, including results, constraints, opportunities and lessons learned.